

dall, Director, Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, California.

On Tuesday morning, the convention was addressed by Mr. Howard Burrell, Attorney, Los Angeles, on "Legislation and Hospitals." Handling this in a proper neutral attitude, Mr. Burrell crystallized the attention on the various types of legislation confronting hospitals at the present time. He went further than actual legal code and discussed court decisions which have become equally as important as legislation. His address was discussed by Mr. Thomas F. Clark, Executive Secretary, Association Western Hospitals, Mr. Clifford Mack, Superintendent, Livermore Sanitarium, Mr. William P. Butler, Manager, San Jose Hospital, Dr. H. H. Johnson, Superintendent, St. Luke's Hospital, San Francisco, C. Rufus Rorem, Ph.D., Representative, American Hospital Association. This session proved to be not only a study of the history of legislation but a guide for future legislative policies for hospitals.

Tuesday afternoon, the convention was addressed by Mr. Frank Van Dyk, Executive Director, Associated Hospital Service of New York, C. Rufus Rorem, Ph.D., Director, Committee on Hospital Service of the American Hospital Association, the subject being "Group Hospitalization." Both Dr. Rorem and Mr. Van Dyk proved to be competent authorities on this problem—Dr. Rorem from his long study of this problem under the American Hospital Association and Mr. Van Dyk in light of his experience as Director of the largest Hospital Service Plan in the United States, now numbering nearly three hundred and fifty thousand members. Both of these speakers emphasized the public service of this plan of budgeting sickness costs—particularly pointing out that Group Hospitalization is primarily a solution of the patient's economic problem and only incidentally beneficial to the hospitals. These addresses were ably discussed by Mr. R. D. Brisbane, Superintendent, Sutter Hospital, Sacramento, Dr. B. C. MacLean, President, American College of Hospital Administrators, Mr. Philo Nelson, Executive Director, Insurance Association of Approved Hospitals, Oakland, Mr. A. G. Saxe, Superintendent, Mt. Zion Hospital, San Francisco, Mr. Roland Maxwell, Attorney, President Methodist Hospital Association, Los Angeles. Mr. R. E. Heerman, Superintendent, California Hospital, lead this discussion hour and emphasized that in Southern California the hospitals themselves were anxious and ready to proceed, some twenty-seven hospitals having already signed qualifying papers and were held up by the necessity of legislation now under consideration at Sacramento enabling their Association to proceed.

On Wednesday morning, Dr. Claude W. Munger, President, American Hospital Association, addressed the convention on the subject "The Interest of the Patient Is Paramount." He stressed the responsibility of the hospitals for providing scientific progress to assure safety and proper sanitation facilities—but beyond these, which he considered minimums in hospital care, he stressed the necessity for considering the new psychologic aspects of the care of patients. He emphasized the necessity of further study in psychiatrics—the training in this subject of nurses, doctors, and the public. He predicted that far greater use of this modality can be expected and that the benefits will be surprisingly beneficial. He placed particular attention on the science of dietetics and predicted further development in this line. Under the leadership of Dr. B. C. MacLean, Superintendent of Memorial Hospital, Rochester, New York, Dr. Munger's address was ably discussed by Rev. Joseph S. O'Connell, Ph.D., Assistant Director of Catholic Hospitals and Division of Health in the Archdiocese of New York; Dr. Alan Benner, Superintendent, San Mateo Community Hospital, San Mateo; Miss Alice Henninger, Superintendent, Huntington Memorial Hospital, Pasadena; Dr. Malcolm T. MacEachern, American College of Surgeons; Miss Reeve Hinyon, Dietitian, California Hospital, Los Angeles.

Wednesday afternoon the session was opened by Dr. B. C. MacLean, who addressed the convention on the subject "The Growth, Causes and Cures of Malpractice Suits." Doctor MacLean very ably presented the problem and through the use of lantern slides gave interesting statistics supporting his discussion. His address was a very capable presentation of a serious hospital problem. Following Doctor MacLean's address, the convention staged one of its

interesting innovations, namely, a mock trial of a malpractice suit. This session proved to be highly interesting and entertaining as well as instructive on this grievous problem. The case of *McGillacudy vs. Lying Down Memorial Hospital* will long be remembered by the many delegates who packed the assembly room and willingly remained forty-five minutes beyond the prescribed hour of adjournment. The trial was conducted realistically under the leadership of Roland Maxwell as Judge, William Rains as Prosecuting Attorney, and Raymond G. Stanbury as Defense Attorney. Many common errors and mistakes were dramatized and searchingly driven home by examination and cross-examination. The law on the subject was very interestingly presented by Judge Maxwell in his charge to the jury. The verdict was in favor of the plaintiff.

At 8:30 on Wednesday evening, the delegates assembled at the Biltmore Rendezvous for their annual banquet. A very high spiritual note was introduced into the convention by Professor Ordway Tead, Columbia University, who addressed the banquet guests on the subject "Can We Have Faith in the Future?"

On Thursday morning, delegates of the convention listened to an address by Dr. Ordway Tead, Lecturer on Personnel Administration, Columbia University, on the subject "Employee Welfare in the Broader Sense." Doctor Tead emphasized the necessity of promulgating in the employee group itself the high motives of hospital service. He drove home the necessity of studying administration itself as scientifically as doctors do the practice of medicine. He candidly discussed the problem of labor unrest which for the first time has reached out and affected hospitals. He urged that administrators approach this problem with an open mind and do the job constructively rather than obstructively. In the discussion which followed later, under the leadership of Mr. William P. Butler, a very spirited attack was made upon this problem. Mr. H. S. Barnes, Superintendent, Latter Day Saints Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah; Dr. W. S. Mortensen, Medical Director, Santa Monica Hospital, Santa Monica, Calif.; Dr. Basil C. MacLean, Strong Memorial Hospital, New York; Mr. R. G. Walker, Assistant Superintendent, California Hospital, Los Angeles, and Dr. Malcolm T. MacEachern, gave varying and personal viewpoints on this challenging subject—differences of opinion were expressed and the delegates were highly interested.

In addition to these general assemblies, sectional programs of exceptional merit were provided by Auxiliary and Volunteer services—cancer clinics, dietitians, hospital pharmacists, trustees, medical social workers, public hospital administrators, and record librarians. Capacity audiences attended all of these sessions and were highly pleased with the programs presented. The consensus of opinion of the delegates, assembling in greater number than ever before, is that this was the most interesting and successful convention ever held on the Pacific Coast.

THE PACIFIC COAST ABORTION RING*†

The Pacific Coast abortion ring has been smashed. The curtain has been rung down on a "racket" as inconceivable in its intimate details as any tale not excepting those found in the Arabian Nights.

This illegal operation project was conceived by Reginald L. Rankin, whose egotism was so self-inspiring that he believed he was "above the law." Said he, "We fear no trouble, for we have the best legal advice." A native of Oregon, former woodsman, timber cruiser, etc., he came to California some twenty-five years ago. The knowledge gained as a "timber cruiser" was put to good use when a

* From the annual report for 1936, Board of Medical Examiners of the State of California, Charles B. Pinkham, M. D., Secretary-Treasurer.

† The Board of Medical Examiners of the State of California has as members: William R. Molony, Sr., President, Los Angeles; Clark L. Abbott, Vice-President, Oakland; Charles B. Pinkham, Secretary-Treasurer, San Francisco; Harry V. Brown, Glendale; Fred R. DeLappe, Modesto; Frederick W. Didier, Wheatland; Percival Dolman, San Francisco; William H. Geistweit, Jr., San Diego; Charles E. Schoff, Sacramento; George Thomason, Los Angeles. Legal Counsel—Attorney General U. S. Webb, San Francisco. Investigation Department—Thomas P. Hunter, Special Agent, San Francisco; Albert Carter, Special Agent, Los Angeles; John Ronan, Assistant Special Agent, Los Angeles.

short time after his arrival in California he handled some disputed tax matters involving some land in San Diego County. Early in 1913 he became well known in Sacramento, where he married. His success in the San Diego affair led him to overestimate his ability.

When late in 1933 he started his meteoric career as promoter of the Pacific Coast abortion ring (which ended in October, 1936, with a state prison sentence) his business card announced him to be a "Tax Factor, Evaluation Engineer and Expert on Income Tax Matters," with offices in the Walter P. Storey Building, 610 South Broadway, Los Angeles. He boasted he was too smart to be caught by law enforcement officers. His false claims of political influence and that the Board of Medical Examiners approved his scheme led some thirty or more individuals to join with him in operating a gigantic illegal operation ring which involved the states of California, Oregon and Washington.

Comment on the Pacific Coast racket appeared in the *Allied Council News*, Denver, Colorado, March 29, 1935, under the heading "The Alleged Abortion Racket—The California Ring—An alleged abortion ring which threatens to become nationwide in scope, is now operating on a chain store basis in the major cities in California. . . . An investigation, the results of which have just been made public, reveals that this syndicate, it is said, employs attractive women to solicit trade, especially among high school girls, soliciting them for illegal operations. The syndicate pays \$10 commission for every case referred. The standard price for abortions is \$50. The investigation is being conducted by Charles B. Pinkham, Secretary of the California State Board of Medical Examiners. . . ."

In this organization were:

1. A crew of salaried abortionists consisting of both physicians and surgeons licensed in California and unlicensed operators;
2. A staff of salaried solicitors for state-wide distribution of the business cards of the ring;
3. Offices in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Long Beach, San Diego, Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington;
4. Private hospitals or "nursing homes" for cases that developed complications;
5. A fleet of airplanes with landing fields both in Oregon and on an isolated ranch hidden in the mountain regions of a Northern California county. The latter was the only level piece of property for miles around. It was purchased ostensibly as a "dude ranch." However, its asserted function was to provide either a "hideout" for any of the operators of the "racket" who might become involved in a police investigation or to provide a "haven" for any operated case that might go "bad."

The keystone of the racket was the Medical Acceptance Corporation. Its main office was in the Signal Oil Building (Room 205), Los Angeles, in close proximity to the office of Dr. George E. Watts, convicted in connection with the Pacific Coast abortion ring. An office of this finance organization was located in every major Pacific Coast city, always in the same building where the abortion syndicate maintained an illegal operation office.

The Seattle office of the Medical Acceptance Corporation, 1904 Third Avenue, Suite 314 (Securities Building), opened on or about October 10, 1935, and W. W. Macfarlane was appointed resident manager. However, he said he resigned about December 19, 1935, when he learned of the type of organization and the work they were doing. The Seattle office, about February, 1936, was moved to the Shafer Building, Seattle, in close proximity to the office of Dr. W. Norman Powers, also convicted in connection with the Pacific Coast abortion racket, whose California medical license was revoked March 11, 1936.

A business card which came to the Board of Medical Examiners during our investigation read, "Medical Acceptance Corporation, 1916 Broadway, Oakland, California, J. M. Lotta, Mgr., Phone HOliday 5771." Another business card received about the same time read, "The American National Detective System, J. M. Lotta, Mgr., Tapscott Building, 1916 Broadway, Oakland. . . ." At this same address Dr. James Beggs (also convicted), assertedly operated one of the offices of the Pacific Coast abortion ring.

The San Francisco office of the Medical Acceptance Corporation was in Rooms 519-520 Elkan Gunst Building, Geary and Powell Streets, San Francisco. In the same building, Room 617, was the office of Dr. James Beggs, and (after Beggs's removal to Oakland), later occupied by Dr. Jesse C. Ross, both convicted in connection with the Pacific Coast abortion ring.

This finance organization furnished unwed mothers with funds to pay for operations performed by doctors on the pay roll of the "syndicate." This racket reversed the old adage, "Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth." The promoters of the Pacific Coast abortion racket, through its Medical Acceptance Corporation, lent money at usurious rates to its victim in one office, then sent her to another office in the same building where said loan was taken as payment for an asserted illegal operation. R. L. Rankin, president of the Medical Acceptance Corporation, was quoted as saying, "We turn our money over every ninety days."

Whenever a woman sought treatment at any of the offices of the Rankin-Watts abortion syndicate, she was required to write her name on the first line and sign the affidavit at the bottom of a "Case Record," which read as follows:

I, being first duly sworn, depose and say that I voluntarily applied to Dr. for treatment on the above date; that my condition demanded immediate attention; that there was nothing of a criminal [sic] or unprofessional nature in the treatment given me; and that I have read the above, and am fully aware of its contents and that the same is true.

(Signed)
Subscribed and sworn to before me this day of, 19

Notary Public for California.

My commission expires, 19

Reports relate that Dr. George E. Watts acted as notary in signing and sealing these affidavits. It is obvious that these were to be used as an alibi should a case go "bad" and any member of the Rankin-Watts abortion ring be charged with performing an illegal operation.

Police reported when, on June 6, 1936, they raided the offices of the Medical Acceptance Corporation, they found about 70 per cent of the "paper" for loans made were for patients of Dr. George E. Watts, seeking relief from pregnancy.

In many instances such an operation was unnecessary because no pregnancy existed. However, that made no difference to the racketeers. Advertisements were inserted in metropolitan daily papers offering pregnancy tests by examination of urine. The abortion syndicate offices claimed to diagnose accurately pregnancy by such an examination. Their procedure assertedly was pure "hokum," because, according to one familiar with the racket, regardless of whether the specimen submitted for examination was from a female or male, a diagnosis of pregnancy was always made.

How intriguing has been the story of this abortion syndicate, as it was gradually unfolded during three years' investigation by the California Board of Medical Examiners, constantly endeavoring through its secretary to discover some clue on which concerted action could be taken to "round up" the entire outfit at one fell stroke.

Betrayal of the trust placed by the Board of Medical Examiners in certain members of its investigation department was indicated early in our study of the various angles of this case. Confidential information both as to conversation and correspondence mysteriously found its way to the leaders of this racket. These "leaks" regarding the progress of our investigation indicated a traitor in our employ. The secretary of the board had his suspicions as to the guilty party. A special meeting of the board was called and employment of a Special Investigator to investigate the board's *Investigation Department*, was authorized. His service began in 1935. Only three people knew his identity, i. e., President Dr. William R. Molony, Secretary Pinkham and a man of unimpeachable integrity who recommended this undercover man. Reports soon warranted the board's ousting our guilty investigator. He was later indicted by the grand jury in San Francisco, as well as Los Angeles, convicted on five counts of the indictment and sentenced to ten to twenty-five years in the penitentiary.

Meanwhile Rankin believed because he had influenced an investigator of the Board of Medical Examiners to turn traitor to his employers and to become his traveling companion, as well as the "front" man in his nefarious deals, that his racket was firmly entrenched. Our investigation disclosed that R. L. Rankin and William Byrne, Investigator for the California Board of Medical Examiners, on October 8, 1935, arrived in Seattle, Washington, via plane. Both registered in the Olympic Hotel at the same hour, 4:13 p. m., occupied adjoining rooms (935 and 937) and checked out at the same time (October 11, 1935, at 11 a. m.). A conversation was held in the Seattle office of the Pacific Coast abortion chain, during which (according to report) it was agreed one of the doctors should drive Byrne to Olympia to try and interest Mr. Harry Huse, Director of Licenses, State of Washington, in the racket. That Byrne did call on the date mentioned was verified by Mr. Huse in a letter to Secretary Pinkham of the California Board.

On Byrne's return to Seattle he reported to Rankin that Mr. Huse was not interested. This assertedly depressed Rankin, who expressed the hope that he might interest Mr. Huse in his subsidiary organization, *i. e.*, the Medical Acceptance Corporation.

While at the Olympic Hotel, Seattle, Rankin telephoned to Los Angeles, California, to one of his associates, Joseph Shinn, secretary-treasurer of the Medical Acceptance Corporation, an asserted director of a Santa Monica bank, in reference to a case said to have been operated on by Dr. Harry Houston in the Long Beach office of the syndicate, which had "gone bad." This patient was then under treatment in the Los Angeles County Hospital. Rankin assertedly requested Shinn to arrange a "pay off" to avoid trouble. Byrne is quoted as having told Rankin he should not have given this instruction to Shinn, as he (Byrne) had the case "fixed." The victim in this case was mentioned as a witness in the Los Angeles trial of the abortion syndicate principal and was quoted as having verified this "pay off."

Rankin called, in November, 1934, on Secretary Pinkham in the San Francisco office of the Board of Medical Examiners and among other statements said he handled all the income tax matters for the abortionists in various Pacific Coast cities, among them being Dr. George E. Watts of Portland, Oregon, who, desirous of opening a practice in California, had requested Rankin to make such a purchase. When told he and his associates would be prosecuted, he boasted he had no fear because of his asserted "influence."

Investigation reports indicated that the procedure used by the leaders of the abortion racket in negotiating the purchase of a "business" was as follows: First, Promoter Rankin would call and make an offer to purchase the business. He would be followed by an investigator for the Board of Medical Examiners, since dismissed, convicted and sentenced to San Quentin Prison. The latter, without intimating that he had knowledge of the visit of the "promoter," would announce he was aware of the character of the business engaged in and threaten arrest if the individual continued same. A few days later the "promoter" would make his second call, renewing his offer to purchase. He would boast of his political influence and as a demonstration thereof would promise to have an investigator of the Board of Medical Examiners call the next day. A sale invariably followed. One Long Beach prospect refused to sell, arguing, "Why should I sell to these racketeers? I have as much right to perform abortions as they." As a result of this refusal a fake arrest of the office nurse was staged. She assertedly was virtually kidnapped as she left her employer's home, thrown into an automobile and whisked away to some unknown "hide out."

Rankin's first purchase of a practice in California was that of an old time practitioner in the Arcade Building, Los Angeles. About April, 1934, Rankin brought Dr. George E. Watts from Portland, Oregon to take over this practice. After a few operations had been performed in the Arcade Building, this practice was moved to Room 210, Signal Oil Building, 811 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles. Dr. Watts, although a non-resident of this state, had been licensed in California in 1899 by the then existing easy process prescribed by law, *i. e.*, by filing his medical college diploma and a fee of \$5.

Soon after Dr. Watts arrived in Los Angeles the California Board of Medical Examiners received a note postmarked Portland, Oregon, relating that Dr. Watts, formerly

of Portland, had located in the Signal Oil Building, Los Angeles, and proposed to "open up a chain of abortion offices in Washington, California and Oregon." We thereupon started an investigation of his past practice. Reports indicated he had practiced for many years in Portland, Oregon, sharing with a Dr. J. W. Morrow an office at 212 Oregonian Building, Portland, Oregon. His practice assertedly had consisted of abortions and, although he had been called before the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners on several occasions, he had escaped punishment because of the difficulty to get the evidence required under the Oregon law.

On or about February 2, 1935, R. L. Rankin registered at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco. In response to his telephoned request, two individuals known to the Board of Medical Examiners came to his room. Negotiations were opened for the purchase of the property at 2240 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, then said to be owned by a resident of Vallejo. These premises had been occupied previously by Harley H. Heddens, erstwhile civil engineer abortionist, convicted by the Board of Medical Examiners in Bakersfield in 1926. On October 18, 1936, following his plea of guilty of manslaughter, Heddens was sentenced to San Quentin Prison by Los Angeles Superior Judge Joseph Vickers for a term of three to fifteen years. In passing sentence Judge Vickers stigmatized the defendants (Heddens, his wife and an assistant) as "the worst illegal operation ring ever to come before the court." "This is a sordid case," he said. "There is no way of telling how many women suffered at the Heddens' clinic. Heddens, an electrical engineer, knowing nothing whatever about the science of medicine, deliberately took the lives of these women into his hands. It is clear by the excellent work of the police and the district attorney in this case that you (the defendants) have performed one hundred or more illegal operations. Not only did you perform these illegal acts, but you did it in the most crude manner possible and without an iota of medical skill."

As a sequel to Rankin's conversation with these "two known individuals" at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, a check for \$250 was passed by Rankin as down payment on the property at 2240 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, and the title thereafter (as well as the Heddens' telephone number), was transferred to the Rankins.

Paul de Gaston, erstwhile photographer, who about 1934 held the photograph concession in one of San Francisco's well-known department stores, succeeded Heddens at 2240 Van Ness Avenue. A jury in a Los Angeles superior court assertedly twice disagreed in 1935 as to his guilt following trial on an illegal operation charge. The discredited investigator for the Board of Medical Examiners was said to have had a hand in tampering with witnesses for the prosecution in this case.* De Gaston was one of those indicted and testified for the prosecution in the Los Angeles trials of the Pacific Coast abortion ring.

In the meantime the Rankin-Watts syndicate opened an office in the Kress Building, Long Beach, and Dr. James Beggs was placed in charge. This office was later moved to the Ocean Center Building with Dr. Harry L. Houston in charge because Dr. James Beggs had been sent to take charge of the San Francisco office in the Elkan Gunst Building.

The practice of another Los Angeles physician was purchased by the Rankin-Watts combination in May, 1935. The statements of this second physician indicate "strong arm" methods were employed by the party or parties interested in making the purchase. Among these was an asserted threat to "bump off" this doctor if he refused to sell. A similar threat assertedly was made to another Los Angeles doctor whose "practice" was desired by the syndicate. A short time later the doctor referred to was killed in an automobile accident under conditions that aroused suspicions.

Investigators reported that in the bill of sale by which a "business" was purchased in Oakland was a clause that in case of the death of the "seller," the property would immediately be possessed by the purchaser. Shortly thereafter the Oakland doctor, whose "business" had been purchased, died. The authorities threatened to exhumate the body, but did not do so.

* Los Angeles Evening News, October 9, 1936.

About this time Rankin purchased the offices operated by Dr. Jesse C. Ross at 6331 Hollywood Boulevard. Then, according to investigation reports, followed in rapid succession the purchase or opening of offices in several other Pacific Coast cities, *i. e.*, Tapscott Building and 3849 Grove Street, Oakland; Dr. Frank Hart, Josiah Green Building, Seattle (June, 1935); Dr. William Norman Powers, Bratton Building, Seattle (July, 1935); E. B. Fromm (sanipractor), 515 Arcade Building, Seattle; Room 407 Commonwealth Building, San Diego; Elkan Gunst Building, San Francisco, and 899 Jackson Street, San Jose.

Early in our investigation we learned that a licensed chiropractor named L. J. Giubbini had been practicing in San Jose since his departure from San Francisco, where he had been watched by our investigation department because of reports received in February, 1931, of the irregularities of the practice he conducted in his office in the Liberty Bank Building, San Francisco. In June, 1931, our former investigator, J. W. Davidson (deceased), reported that with a member of the San Jose Police Department he had called on Giubbini, Rooms 502-3 First National Bank Building, San Jose, and warned him that the character of his business was known and if continued he would be arrested. Although Giubbini moved from the First National Bank Building to 265 South Eleventh Street, and later to 899 Jackson Street, San Jose, the warning apparently was not heeded, judging from the following incident uncovered after we had started our investigation of the Pacific Coast abortion ring. This information was sent to Secretary Pinkham by the distracted father of the deceased. Those who have daughters may well shudder at the gruesome tragedy and pray it may never strike home.

Paths involved every line of what proved to be the death note of a fear-stricken daughter written November 24, 1932, to her devoted father. The heartbreaking sermon in that letter strikes to the very heart of fond parents and law abiding citizens. Said she:

Dear Papa—I want you to know this in case anything happens to me—Tomorrow I am going to San Jose to the Pacific Bacteriological Laboratory—to a doctor for an illegal peration. . . . If I don't come back please remember I am telling the truth. I don't know the doctor's name, but Marvin Ralthe* who works for the Lyne Drug Company there does, as it is through his appointment. . . . You will hear from me in a few days if I am all right. . . .
Much love (Signed) V.

On arriving at the house of death she penned a short note, reading:

Papa—this is the place—change address—899 East Jackson St. Two-story white house—San Jose.

Death closed her career four days later at 899 Jackson Street, San Jose. The death certificate gave the cause of death, "Epileptic (note spelling) Seizures" and was signed Joy V. Simmons, 899 East Jackson Street (San Jose). The "Proof of Death" certificate to an organization in which this poor girl was insured, showed as attending physician a signature purporting to be that of Joy V. Simmons. Underneath was written "Per Dr. L. J. Giubbini, Assistant," 899 Jackson Street, San Jose, Calif. This "Proof of Death" certificate shows it was sworn to before Edward A. Uhl, notary public, San Jose, by Dr. L. J. Giubbini, January 30, 1933.

On November 28, 1932, a grief stricken father from a northern California town wired:

Chief of Police,
San Jose, California.

My daughter, Mrs. A. Dryden, died there today. I have sufficient reason to request that a very strict examination be made into this case to determine the cause of death.
. . . Answer.

(Signed).....

That the father of the deceased discussed the matter with the Santa Clara County district attorney is shown by the following letter dated San Jose, January 6, 1933, addressed to him:

This office has investigated quite thoroughly the facts of the case which you discussed with Mr. Fred L. Thomas, District Attorney of this county, and also with Mr. Chesley M. Douglas, Assistant District Attorney, on December 13, 1932. By our investigation we have not been able to obtain sufficient information to warrant action

being taken against either one of the parties against whom you made the complaint. We will, however, continue our investigation and if at any future time we are able to obtain what appears to be sufficient information to warrant complaints being issued, we will advise you further in the matter. If we can be of any further assistance to you do not hesitate to call on us. . . .

(Signed).....

What of the subsequent history of the premises, 899 Jackson Street, San Jose, where the death occurred? In a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Medical Examiners, dated San Jose, October 1, 1936, the following information is given:

San Jose, Calif.,
October 1, 1936.

Mr. C. B. Pinkham,
Sacramento, Calif.

Dear Sir: Your letter a few days ago, in reply will say L. J. Giubbini purchased the property at 899 E. Jackson on August 28, 1932, of Lucy H. Neher later my wife, Mrs. Charles E. Ritter, who died June 8, 1934. Giubbini assumed one mortgage of \$3,000 and one \$1,400, then gave a third mortgage of \$3,700 to Mrs. Neher, then L. J. Giubbini was to pay \$55.00 per mo. on the \$3,700.00 loan, which he did until paid down to \$2,640.00. Then in October, 1935, leased the building to a Mr. Ranken, I believe, but in September, 1932, L. J. Giubbini deeded the property to his father, L. D. Giubbini, at 1734 Lyon Street, San Francisco, Calif., but lived at said place until October, 1934. In November, 1935, he discontinued paying the \$55.00, also was back on the \$3,000 and \$1,400 mortgage, so I was compelled to start action of foreclosure, which I did January, 1935. Thirty days later his father offered to except \$50.00 for deed to me as I held the Neher mortgage which my wife had willed to me, as she had passed on. Then L. J. Giubbini moved to a place owned by his father L. D. Giubbini at Livermore, Calif., known as the Fountain Hospital, No. 24 Tel. Phone. This is all I can give you in regard to L. J. G.

Yours truly,

(Signed) CHAS. E. RITTER,
899 E. Jackson,
San Jose.

The above letter indicates that R. L. Rankin, asserted head of the Pacific Coast abortion ring, took over the premises in October, 1935. A nurse named Violette Pelligrini, said to be a former employee of Giubbini, thereupon continued as nurse-employee of Rankin, who according to court records, placed Dr. Jesse C. Ross in charge. The latter, following conviction by a Los Angeles jury in connection with the Pacific Coast abortion racket, was sentenced to ten to twenty-five years in the state penitentiary at San Quentin. Another nurse named Tieman, employed on the premises, testifying* during the recent Pacific Coast abortion ring trials in Los Angeles, related a most gruesome procedure which she assertedly saw. Her story involved the asserted "cutting up" of a foetus born alive on the premises, 899 Jackson Street, San Jose. Nurse Pelligrini was sentenced to one year in the Los Angeles county jail following her conviction in connection with the Pacific Coast abortion racket.

But I am ahead of my story, so let us pause and learn more about this Joy V. Simmons, whose name was signed to the previously mentioned death certificate of V. D.

The records of the Board of Medical Examiners show he secured a diploma from the Western College of Chiropractic, dated San Francisco, June 20, 1923; that shortly thereafter he was denied admission to the written examination for drugless practitioners under the medical act. He appealed and the board was compelled by action of the San Francisco superior court to grant Simmons a drugless practitioner certificate. According to police records, Simmons thereafter gained a criminal record which culminated in his conviction in Los Angeles of abortion, assertedly performed at 8712 Darrington Avenue, Beverly Hills, on November 30, 1933, and his being sent to San Quentin for a "term prescribed by law." His drugless practitioner license was revoked March 1, 1934.

Our investigation indicated that in November, 1933, one calling himself J. V. Roberts was at 899 Jackson Street, San Jose (keep the address in mind). The San Jose Merchants Association at that time was interested in learning whether J. V. Simmons, 260 North Third Street, San Jose, was the same as J. V. Roberts, 899 Jackson Street,

* Again mentioned on page 15.

* Los Angeles Herald-Express, October 23, 1936.

San Jose. The latter premises had been reported by our investigation department as the headquarters of L. J. Giubbini, licensed chiropractor. That J. V. Roberts and Joy Simmons were one and the same individual was indicated by the death certificate already mentioned.

During the year 1935 the Pacific Coast abortion racket had reached its peak with offices doing a land office business in Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Long Beach and San Diego. Rankin in an asserted dictaphone conversation was "caught" as boasting that one office alone last year (1934) "had handled 1400 cases and the entire organization handled 4400 cases."

Attorney Buron Fitts of Los Angeles, Chief Deputy Chamberlain in the office of District Attorney Earl Warren of Alameda County, Captain of Detectives Charles Dullea and the homicide squad of the San Francisco Police Department had been advised of the magnitude of the racket. The secretary of the Board of Medical Examiners by correspondence and in personal interviews had given complete and detailed information to these enforcement officers. All were waiting for that "break" which eventually would make possible the final clean up of the entire racket. Captain Dullea had detailed two of his best inspectors to "smoke out" the racket, which with headquarters in Los Angeles was rapidly spreading to other states. The "break" came unexpectedly one afternoon when San Francisco Police Inspectors George Engler and Harry Husted were browsing about the Elkan Gunst Building, San Francisco. They casually called at the office of Dr. Jesse C. Ross. While there a young man came in and asked for "Mr. Rankin" and left when told by the nurse that Rankin had not been in. The officers then stepped into the office of the Medical Acceptance Corporation and there saw the same young man. Regarding him with suspicion and convinced he had an intimate acquaintanceship with the personnel of the offices, they suggested he accompany them to headquarters. In his automobile were found hundreds of the "business cards" of the various offices of the abortion syndicate, each bearing the name of the doctor in charge, all bound in packages of about 50 each, perforated so as to be easily torn from the binding. These he said he passed out in drug stores and other places, with directions they be given to any woman seeking relief from pregnancy. On arrival at headquarters this young man gave his name as Marvin Raithel,* drug clerk by vocation, and acknowledged he was a salaried solicitor for the abortion racket. Captain Dullea, with Inspectors Engler and Husted, and assisted by the police department stenographer, took a two-hour statement, in which were revealed the intimate details of the entire organization. Responding to a call from Captain Dullea, the secretary and an investigator for the Board of Medical Examiners joined in quizzing Raithel. Here at last was conclusive evidence by which the long investigated Pacific Coast abortion racket could be smashed. San Francisco District Attorney Brady detailed his assistant, John McMahon, to the case, to whom great credit is due for his persistent and self-sacrificing work. Alameda County Assistant District Attorney Coakley was summoned and the raids commenced. First to the offices in the Elkan Gunst Building, where most important information, card records, etc., were seized and taken to headquarters. The following day Assistant District Attorney McMahon, with Inspectors Engler and Husted, and accompanied by Alameda Assistant District Attorney Coakley, flew to Los Angeles, where with trusted investigators from the office of Los Angeles District Attorney Buron Fitts, offices of the syndicate in Hollywood, Los Angeles and Long Beach were raided. Truckloads of material, records, etc., were confiscated and shipped to San Francisco to remain in custody of the authorities.

A short time thereafter Deputy District Attorney McMahon and Inspector Engler raided the San Diego office of the syndicate. They found Laura Miner in charge of the office with Nedra Arden. Valuable statements were taken and Laura Miner afterward testified for the prosecution in the Los Angeles trials.

Assistant District Attorney McMahon, Captain Charles Dullea, with Inspectors Engler and Husted, worked night and day in segregating the evidence so that no time should

be lost in presenting the details of the Pacific Coast abortion racket to the San Francisco grand jury.

On June 18, 1936, indictments charging violating the provisions of Section 274 and Subdivision 1 of Section 182 of the Penal Code of California were brought by the San Francisco grand jury against the following asserted principals and associates in the Pacific Coast abortion ring: Nedra Arden (nurse), Dr. James Beggs, Beatrice Bole, asserted solicitor; William A. Byrne (former investigator for Medical Board); Grace Cole, receptionist; John A. Creeth, secretary Medical Acceptance Corporation; Paul de Gaston, Josephine Follett, L. J. Giubbini, D. C., Leola Habel (Sarah L. Lee), office nurse; Ruth Hansen, Dr. Harry L. Houston, Gladys Korf, Bessie McCarthy, Zora McEwen, Laura Miner, Dr. E. T. Patee, Violette Pellegrini (Violet Brown), J. C. Perry, San Francisco office Medical Acceptance Corporation; Dr. William Norman Powers, Reginald L. Rankin, Violet Rankin, Marvin Raithel, Dr. Jesse C. Ross, Dr. (A. H.) Valentine St. John, J. O. Shinn, Medical Acceptance Corporation; Dr. F. B. Smith, Viola Warner, Dr. George E. Watts, Lillian Wilson, Mary Wilson. Warrants for their arrest were issued.

Assistant District Attorney McMahon, Captain Charles Dullea with Inspectors George Engler and Harry Husted daily pored over the accumulated evidence.

Seattle police reported the apprehension of L. J. Giubbini and Violette Pellegrini as they disembarked from a steamer on which, assertedly under the name of Dr. and Mrs. Victor Angelo, they had completed a cruise to Alaska. Away went Assistant District Attorney McMahon and Inspector Engler to Seattle, fortified with extradition papers for the return of the fugitives. Although the Seattle authorities had been requested to hold the fugitives until the arrival of the San Francisco authorities, the latter found the "birds had flown" before their arrival. However the trip was not in vain, for while in Seattle they obtained a most valuable signed statement from Paul de Gaston (indicted), who later testified for the prosecution in the Los Angeles trials.

District Attorney Buron Fitts of Los Angeles joined in the chase of those connected with the Pacific Coast abortion ring. He assigned his deputy, Verne Ferguson, to the task of cleaning up this racket. He came to San Francisco with two investigators of the Los Angeles Police Department, made some special investigations, went over the evidence accumulated by the San Francisco authorities. Thereafter on August 27, 1936, the Los Angeles grand jury returned indictments against the following individuals associated in the Pacific Coast abortion racket: Dr. James A. Beggs, Beatrice Bole, William A. Byrne, Grace Cole, John A. Creeth, Dr. Harry Houston, Bessie McCarthy, Grace Moore, Violette Pellegrini, J. C. Perry, Dr. William Norman Powers, Jessie Radcliffe, R. L. Rankin, Dr. Jesse C. Ross, Dr. (E. H.) Valentine St. John, J. O. Shinn, Dr. George E. Watts, Lillian Wilson.

All those indicted either surrendered to the authorities or were apprehended, excepting Beatrice Bole and Dr. Harry Houston, who at last accounts were still fugitives from justice.

Following conferences between the representatives of the district attorneys of San Francisco and Los Angeles it was agreed the trials be held in Los Angeles, the headquarters of the racket. It was also agreed that San Francisco Assistant District Attorney John McMahon was to assist Los Angeles Assistant District Attorney Verne Ferguson in the prosecution of those indicted.

Came the day of trial. Some fourteen indicted individuals, with a battery of five defense attorneys, appeared before one of California's most learned and fearless judges, Honorable Arthur Crum.

An editorial headed "Breaking Up of Criminal Abortion Syndicate," published in the *Bulletin* of the Los Angeles Medical Association, November 6, 1936, stated: "... At the beginning of the trial it appeared that 'jury fixers' were active. In order to keep the jury free from this influence the trial judge, Judge Arthur Crum, ordered the jury locked up during the trial. Later, upon evidence supplied by Mr. Ferguson that there was tampering with witnesses, Judge Crum, with commendable courage, ordered several of the accused held in the county jail during the period of the trial"

* Previously mentioned.

The prosecution required almost one month to present its testimony. The defense had but little to offer. Prosecution testimony sparkled with sensational evidence as the prosecution, step by step, unwound the intricate workings of the racket. How the internal revenue income tax experts must have sharpened their pencils after hearing the fabulous revenue derived from the abortion business! Testimony of representatives of certain banks, depositories for the R. L. Rankin Company, the Medical Acceptance Corporation and R. L. Rankin disclosed unbelievable transactions. Representatives of the Western Union Telegraph Company testified they had transported sums of money to Rankin. Assistant District Attorney Verne Ferguson was quoted in the *Los Angeles Herald Express*, October 15, 1936, as stating he would prove that many thousands of the \$1,000,000 he claims the syndicate made in 1935 was sent to Rankin by wire. Laura Miner was quoted in the *Los Angeles Evening News*, October 15, 1936, as testifying that a year previous William Byrne, one time investigator for the Medical Board, threatened her with arrest if she did not join the syndicate; how she had been placed in charge of the San Diego office on salary; how she had been instructed by Rankin as to the bookkeeping system to be followed in all offices; how and where she remitted revenue to Rankin; how she received weekly salary checks, signed R. L. Rankin, by J. L. Shinn, and how later she assertedly was "strong armed" by Rankin into buying the San Diego office. "She introduced in court six \$1,000 checks she said she had been forced to give to 'the boys' for 'protection.'" She said after being coerced into joining the "ring," she was later forced to buy back her own business for \$30,000.

Bernice Tieman, former nurse in the San Jose office of the abortion syndicate and witness for the prosecution, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 21, 1936, as testifying, "Mr. Rankin told me after the raids on the clinic last June, that they would get rid of me if I turned State's evidence." Paul de Gaston (heretofore mentioned on page 12), a prosecution witness, testified that although he was not licensed to practice medicine anywhere in the United States, he was employed by the ring at a salary of \$750 a month, eventually opening branches for Rankin in Seattle and San Francisco; that he was furnished with licenses, making it appear he was a duly licensed physician; that in San Francisco (2240 Van Ness Avenue), he hung on the wall of his office a framed license for a "Dr. Hosch." (According to San Francisco Police Department, this was a license in the name of Dr. Jacob F. Hosch, licensed in Oregon, but not in California.) De Gaston testified that he operated under that name and that in Seattle he used the name Dr. T. F. Read to conform with a certificate furnished by Rankin bearing that name. (*Hollywood Citizen News*, October 9, 1936.)

Mrs. Gladys Duckworth, prosecution witness, testified that prior to the trial Rankin and William A. Byrne called on her and worked on her sympathy. "Mrs. Miner said that Rankin and Miss Elsa Timler (Timner), friend of Byrne, asked her 'not to remember' certain testimony." (*Los Angeles Evening News*, October 9, 1936.) This evidence, as well as similar testimony by Nedra Cordon (also known as Nedra Arden) and Dr. W. Norman Powers, caused Superior Judge Crum to revoke the bail of Byrne and Rankin, who were then ordered into custody of the sheriff during the remainder of the trial. (*Los Angeles Examiner*, October 9, 1936.)

On October 24, 1936, the jury brought in the verdicts as follows: Dr. James Beggs, William A. Byrne, Grace Moore, Reginald R. Rankin, Dr. Jesse C. Ross, J. O. Shinn, Dr. George E. Watts, and Lillian Wilson were found guilty on five counts; Violette Pellegrini was found guilty on three counts; John Creeth and Dr. (A. H.) Valentine St. John, were found guilty on two counts; and Dr. William Norman Powers, plead guilty to one count.

Thereafter sentences (to run consecutively, not concurrently) were imposed by Superior Judge Crum as follows: Dr. James Beggs, William A. Byrne, Reginald Rankin, Dr. Jesse C. Ross, and Dr. George E. Watts, were sentenced to ten to twenty-five years in the penitentiary. Dr. (A. H.) Valentine St. John was sentenced to state prison for a term of four to ten years. John Creeth and J. O. Shinn were given five years' probation, without requirement that they serve any time in jail. Dr. William Norman Powers, who testified for the prosecution, was

sentenced to state prison, which sentence was suspended and he was put on probation for three years, which includes a condition that he spend six months in the Los Angeles County jail and shall not practice medicine during the period of his probation, but may return to the State of Washington following completion of his jail term. Violette Pellegrini was given probation on condition she serve one year in the Los Angeles County jail. Lillian Wilson and Grace Moore were also given probation, on condition they serve six months in the Los Angeles County jail. Defendants J. C. Perry and Mrs. Jesse Radcliffe were acquitted. According to the *Los Angeles Herald Express*, November 6, 1936, Dr. (A. H.) Valentine St. John, a British born naturalized citizen of Rumania, may be taken from state prison after a year and deported. Beggs, Byrne, Rankin, Ross, St. John, and Watts have filed notice of appeal.

So endeth the Pacific Coast abortion ring—"Up like a rocket and down like a stick." Its doctors dropped with a sickening thud from an income of about \$1,000 per month to the squalid fare of a state prison.

Said the "Bulletin of the Los Angeles Medical Association" in its issue of November 5, 1936, under the heading "Breaking Up of Criminal Abortion Syndicate":

The criminal abortion syndicate which flourished in California during the last few years has been broken. In the Superior Court of Los Angeles County the members of this syndicate have been convicted of criminal conspiracy. This syndicate operated a racket which had no parallel. In its operation there were banded together a group of heartless promoters, doctors, nurses and public officers, who believed themselves above the law and without danger of being attacked. To Dr. Charles B. Pinkham, Secretary of the State Board of Medical Examiners, to the District Attorney of San Francisco County and to Buron Fitts, District Attorney of Los Angeles County, goes credit for the indictments that brought the members of this syndicate to trial. Early in the investigation Mr. Fitts assigned Mr. Verne Ferguson to full time on the case. To Mr. Ferguson and Mr. McMahon (Assistant District Attorney of San Francisco) is due the major credit for the exhaustive investigation which brought so complete a presentation to the jury that convictions were obtainable . . . The citizens of this state and particularly the medical profession, should feel deeply grateful that our law enforcement officers have been alert and have done an excellent bit of work in clearing up what was fast becoming a disgraceful condition—a condition which struck deeply into the finer standards and ideals of our profession.

CALIFORNIA INFANT MORTALITY RATES*

Adjusted for California Residence

Infant mortality rates have long been recognized as a most sensitive index to actual public health conditions within the community. Because of the fact that births and deaths of infants often occur in places other than those constituting the true place of residence of the mother, it has been difficult, in the past, to secure a reliable record of infant mortality in the various communities of California. Through the use of a Works Progress Administration project, adjusted infant mortality rates have been made for the years 1934 and 1935; such adjustments covering the rural districts and the incorporated cities within each county of the State.

In those cities where the county hospital is located within a large center of population, that city's infant mortality rate is conspicuously high because many infants are brought from the rural districts of the county into the city where death occurs. Similarly, in those counties where the county hospital is outside of the incorporated limits of any city, the infant mortality rate for the rural district is excessive.

It should be understood that, in this work, the births in these communities were adjusted for residence and the deaths as well. The adjusted infant mortality rates, therefore, provide a true index to infant mortality in these communities during the two years covered by the project. The rates for the State as a whole are changed slightly due to adjustments caused by residence outside of the State.

* Reprinted from California State Board of Health Bulletin.